

By STUART EARP Wycombe Wanderers 2, Hendon 1

THREE of the worst goals you are likely to see all season decided Tuesday night's Isthmian League Premier Division encounter at Loakes Park with Wycombe Wanderers deservedly getting the verdict over Hendon.

But although all three goals came from defensive errors, this game provided a wealth of entertainment for the 1,000 crowd who watched the Blues record their second success of the season.

At times the football was excellent... at others it was awful. Overall though, there was plenty of goalmouth incidents to keep the fans on their toes throughout the 90 minutes.

One man at the centre of all this action was Hendon keeper Gary Still who had a most eventful evening. He produced a string of first class saves to deny Wycombe but made two errors that gave them the points. Wanderers made the most of their chances but kept their supporters on tenterhooks until the final whistle.

This was partly due to an unusually suspect performance by their defence where Alan Phillips was uncertain against his former clubmates. The back four looked a little over-confident at times and played themselves into trouble early on.

Elsewhere there was another highly promising performance from Graham Mackenzie while his midfield colleague Mick Hollifield was ever dangerous with his surging runs. Up front Dylan Evans had one of those night's when little went right for him and his lack of control on a difficult surface often let him down. Fortunately, Tony Horseman balanced things out with a useful performance, collecting seven stitches in a head wound for his trouble.

Wycombe, facing three ex-Blues in Gary Hand, Peter Anderson and Glen Swaby, first

discovered the speed of Still's reflexes in the eighth minute. Hollifield broke into the box, Horseman nodded the ball across and Evans' power header looked a certain goal from five yards. Somehow Still parried the ball away.

With Howard Kennedy stretching play wide with some searching long passes, Wanderers had much the better of the early stages. Mackenzie chipped just over and after 28 minutes Horseman's deft flick sent Hollifield clear with only Still to beat. But the 'keeper timed his run perfectly to whip the ball off Hollifield's toes.

DETERIORATED

The inevitable rain began to cause Wanderers' problems towards the end of the half and their passing deteriorated. Any lack of control was quickly picked up by Hendon whose best effort came a minute before the break. Roy Butler, who had a fine game, turned on the edge of the box and fired in a dipping left foot drive which Peter Spittle turned over the top.

Butler's warning went unheeded for three minutes into the second half he was most unlucky not to open Hendon's account. This time he ran some 20 yards before unleashing another left foot 'dipper' which curled over Spittle and thumped against the crossbar.

Five minutes later, the first of a string of defensive errors gave Hendon the lead. Paul Birdseye and Spittle made a hash of a short free kick and Butler nipped in to dispossess the 'keeper'. The ball ran loose to George Brookes who gratefully rammed it high into the net.

But Wycombe, who scored within 40 seconds of Leatherhead's goal on Saturday, did the same again. Within a minute Birdseye sent in a

hopeful ground shot from outside the box. Still, slipping on the greasy surface, spilled the ball at Kennedy's feet and he snapped up the gift to make it 1-1.

Wanderers had their best spell after the goal, pinning Hendon firmly back in their own half with six corners in 15 minutes. Still went down bravely at Evans' feet but in the 66th minute, another mistake gave Wycombe their winner.

Following another corner, Evans sent in a powerful header which struck a Hendon defender and looped into the air. Still slipped again, damaged his knee and could only palm the ball into his own net. He was able to continue after lengthy treatment but play was soon interrupted again when Horseman was injured in a clash of heads.

With 15 minutes remaining, Still showed no signs of the injury when he dived brilliantly to tip away Kennedy's thunderous 30 yard drive and two minutes later the goalkeeper was at it again, pushing Mackenzie's shot around a post following an indirect free kick.

By this time, Wanderers should have been home and dry but while the score stood at 2-1, Hendon were always in with a chance of getting back on level terms. They almost did it too, in the 87th minute when Phillips sliced a clearance high into his own penalty area. A couple of shots were blocked in a hectic scramble before the ball was thumped to safety.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; H. Kennedy, G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, M. Hollifield; A. Horseman, D. Evans.

HENDON: G. Still; P. Anderson, P. Deadman, A. Campbell, G. Hand; R. Helder, A. Field, G. Swaby (sub S. Jeffries 74 mins); J. Butterfield, R. Butler, G. Brookes.

Half-time: 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Kennedy (54), Evans (66). Hendon — Brookes (53).

Referee: J. Martin (Abzan).

Attendance: 1,000.



Wycombe Wanderers' equaliser against Leatherhead on Saturday. John Priestley (6) gets to the ball ahead of goalkeeper John Swannell to head home.